



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

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Belgium-Luxembourg

Fishery Products

PCB MRL in Fish Soon to be Limited to 75

Micrograms per Kilo

2002

Approved by:

Philip A. Letarte

U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Marie-France Rogge

Highlights:

The PCB MRL for fish, shellfish and crustaceans is 75 micrograms per kilo. Also, as a result of a study on PCB-pollution in river eels, a ban has been legislated on river eels and predator fish.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
The Hague [NL1], BE

Fish, Shellfish, Crustaceans

Belgian federal Minister of Health and Environment, Magda Aelvoet, has specified the MRL for PCB in fish at 75 micrograms per kilo fish, shellfish and crustaceans, which will soon be published in a Royal Decree.

In most food, such as meat, the PCB MRL has been set at 200 micrograms per kilo for a long time. According to the Cabinet of the Minister, the new norm for fish is partly based on measurements taken by IVI (Institute of Veterinary Inspection) in cooperation with the Scientific Human Health Institute.

The Minister has also decided that, effective immediately, fish cannot be traded without prior approval and without being declared fit for human consumption.

River Eels

In the meantime, the Flemish Minister of Environment and Agriculture, Vera Dua, decided that river eels could not be consumed anymore due to high PCB levels. They may be fished, but must be thrown back into the water. Vera Dua advises consumers not to eat river eels or predator fish which are caught in Flemish rivers. The Minister made the decision based on a study of PCB pollution in river eels. She issued a ban on consumption of all fish species from five locations where severe pollution was recorded. In these five locations, the possible source of pollution is being verified and which sanitary measures could be taken. The Minister specified that she does not want to negatively impact fishing for sport but rather wants to protect the consumer against potentially dangerous products. She also emphasized that this advice only concerns wild eels and predator fish but not farm raised eels, which can be considered to be safe.